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16 October 1965

BRIEFING NOTES  
FOR THE DCI

CUBA

- I. Fidel Castro remains pre-eminent on the political scene. Under present conditions the chances are slight that he will be overthrown from within.
  - A. The Cuban military under the premier's brother Raul, the loyal security forces, the united party, and other mass organizations ensure Castro's position.
  - B. Moreover, the Cuban economy appears to have started recovering at least temporarily from the decline of recent years. The economy probably will continue to improve gradually, at least through the end of next year, but the long-range outlook is uncertain.
- II. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the former minister of industries, and the regime's foremost revolutionary, has now left the Cuban political scene and may even have left Cuba.

**SECRET**

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- A. On 3 October, Fidel Castro read a letter, purportedly written by Guevara about 1 April, in which Guevara reiterated his respect for Castro and the Cuban revolution but stated that Guevara must now make his "modest effort" toward the achievement of revolutions in other, unspecified countries.
- B. Guevara probably fell from favor as the result of policy differences with Castro, centering on how to solve problems of the Cuban economy and the correct approach to revolutionary activity in the hemisphere.

III. Negotiations are continuing between the US and Cuban governments over the possible large-scale movement of Cubans to the US.

- A. Both governments agree that priority should be given to Cubans who have close relatives in the US--a total of 42,500 people or more.
- B. Discussions will also be held over the possible release of political prisoners who would also come to the US.

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C. Both governments agree that an "orderly process" is desirable but final details on methods of travel and administrative procedures have not been decided.

IV. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko is arriving in Cuba on 19 October for a five-day visit.

A. This is the first visit to Cuba by a ranking Soviet official since January 1964 and may well be devoted to a general review of Soviet-Cuban relations.

B. Fidel Castro has not visited the USSR since January 1964 and there is a possibility that he might return with Gromyko.

1. This would provide Castro his first opportunity to meet with the post-Khrushchev Soviet leadership.
2. Raul Castro, who is now in the USSR, may be laying the groundwork for such a visit.

V. The number of Soviet military personnel in Cuba now totals about 2,000. Their role is basically that of a military advisory group.

**SECRET**

**SECRET**

- A. This number has remained fairly steady since the last major withdrawal of Soviets in the summer of 1964.
- B. The size of the Cuban military establishment also remains fairly constant, although the level of proficiency is constantly being improved by training in the USSR and China.

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